

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 SMI-01 HEW-08 COA-02

CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01

SP-03 AGR-20 INT-08 NSF-04 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CU-05 DRC-01

EUR-25 /145 W

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R 061037Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3091

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NY

DOD WASHDC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10395

DEPT PASS TO SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE FOR DILLON RIPLEY;

HEW FOR SURGEON GENERAL; DOD FOR DEPT OF ARMY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO

SUBJ: INDIAN GOVERNMENT DEFENSE ON WHO-SPONSORED SCIENTIFIC
RESEARCH

FOLNG SENT NEW DELHI INFO CALCUTTA, MADRAS FROM BOMBAY DTD
05 AUG.

QUOTE: BOMBAY 1810

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO IN

SUBJ: INDIAN GOVERNMENT DEFENSE ON WHO-SPONSORED
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

REF BOMBAY 1790

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1. TEXT FOLLOWS DRAFT LETTER PREPARED BY DR NANAVATI, SECRETARY BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, WHICH, HE STATES, WAS OVERTAKEN BY DR SALIM ALI'S EARLIER SUBMISSION TO PRESS. NANAVATI STATES HE WILL CONSULT WITH SALIM ALI ON BEST WAY UTILIZE AND WILL KEEP ME POSTED.

2. "THE NEWSPAPERS HAVE FEATURED RECENTLY, 29TH JULY, AN ARTICLE BY THE "SCIENTIFIC CORRESPONDENT" OF P.T.I. CASTING ASPERSIONS ON THE BONA FIDES OF SOME OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES OF THE WHO AND THE BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY. IT IS SURPRISING THAT RESPONSIBLE NEWSPAPERS SHOULD PUBLISH SUCH ARTICLES WITHOUT FIRST ASCERTAINING THE ACCURACY OF THE STATEMENTS MADE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE REFUTATION OF SIMILAR ALLEGATIONS MADE IN PARLIAMENT ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO.

"THE PROMINENCE GIVEN TO THIS ARTICLE MAY LEAD UNINFORMED PERSONS TO SUPPOSE THAT THERE MAY BE SOME TRUTH IN THE ALLEGATIONS, AS HAS BEEN SHOWN BY THE DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT AFTER ITS PUBLICATION. IT IS ONLY FAIR THEREFORE THAT YOU WILL GIVE EQUAL PROMINENCE TO THIS LETTER. I HAVE BEEN INTIMATELY ASSOCIATED WITH SOME OF THE STUDIES MENTIONED, BOTH AS HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VIROLOGY AT THE HAFKINE INSTITUTE, AND AS A MEMBER, AND NOW HONORARY SECRETARY, OF THE BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY. I CANNOT ANSWER ALL THE INACCURACIES IN THE ARTICLE FOR WANT OF SPACE, BUT I MAY STATE THE MAIN FACTS ABOUT THOSE ASPECTS OF WHICH I HAVE PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE, SO THAT YOUR READERS CAN JUDGE FOR THEMSELVES.

"WHEN KYASANUR FOREST DISEASE APPEARED AS A NEW DISEASE IN KARNATAKA STATE, THE THEORY WAS ADVANCED THAT THIS DISEASE COULD HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED BY MIGRATING BIRDS, SINCE IT WAS CLOSELY ALLIED TO RUSSIAN SPRING SUMMER ENCEPHALITIS, WHICH PREVAILS IN SIBERIA, AND SEVERAL SPECIES OF BIRDS ARE KNOWN TO MIGRATE BETWEEN SIBERIA AND INDIA. THE WHO AGREED TO SUPPORT A STUDY ON THIS PROBLEM UNDER DR SALIM ALI, ONE OF THE PIONEERS OF STUDIES ON BIRD MIGRATION, WITH THE BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY PROVIDING THE FIELD STAFF AND THE VIRUS RESEARCH CENTRE, POONA DOING THE VIROLOGICAL STUDIES. THE PROGRAMME AROUSED WORLD WIDE INTEREST AMONG VIROLOGISTS, ENTOMOLOGISTS AS WELL AS ORNITHOLOGISTS, AND THE BIRD CAMPS WERE VISITED BY SCIENTISTS FROM MANY COUNTRIES. ANY RELEVANT INFORMATION CAN EMERGE ONLY AFTER MASSES OF DATA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COLLATED AND ANALYSED FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME ARE STUDIED. THIS WORK WAS DONE ENTIRELY BY OUR STAFF.

"AFTER A FEW YEARS STUDY, IT APPEARED THAT SUCH TRANSMISSION OF VIRAL DISEASE, EVEN IF THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE, WAS NOT OF GREAT PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE FROM THE PUBLIC HEALTH POINT OF VIEW, AND THE WHO DISCONTINUED ITS SUPPORT. THE BIRD MIGRATION STUDIES, AND THE FIELD STAFF TRAINED FOR THIS PURPOSE WERE LEFT

WITHOUT FUNDS.

SUPPORT FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THESE STUDIES WAS
OBTAINED FROM VARIOUS AGENCIES FOR SHORT OR LONG TERMS, AND THE
RESEARCH WAS CONTINUED ALBEIT IN A HALTING AND UNCERTAIN MANNER.
AMONG THE FOREIGN AGENCIES WHICH SUPPORTED THESE STUDIES WERE
THE MIGRATORY ANIMALS PATHOLOGICAL SURVEY,
A RESEARCH ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY, AND LATER, THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE,
WASHINGTON, DC. DR SALIM ALI HAS ALREADY MADE A
STATEMENT ABOUT THE TERMS OF THE GRANT FROM THE MAPS ORGANIZATION,
AND I NEED NOT ELABORATE.

"INDIA IS A POOR COUNTRY. WE HAVE MANY RESEARCH PROBLEMS FOR WHICH
WE HAVE NO RESOURCES. THEREFORE, AT ANY GIVEN TIME, A LARGE NUMBER
OF RESEARCH PROJECTS ARE IN PROGRESS, WITH SUPPORT FROM
FOREIGN FUNDS. IN THE NORMAL COURSE, A RESEARCH WORKER DRAWS UP
UP A PLAN AND SENDS IT TO A DONOR ORGANISATION FOR GRANTS.
THE DONOR ORGANISATION DOES NOT DRAW UP OR DICTATE THE FIELD OF
STUDY, IT MERELY ACCEPTS OR REJECTS THE PROPOSAL. IN THE CASE OF
FOREIGN GRANTS, THE SAME PROCEDURE APPLIES, WITH ONE ADDITIONAL
STEP. THE PROPOSAL HAS TO BE APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
WHO APPOINTS ONE OR MORE INDEPENDENT EXPERTS TO SCRUTINIZE THE
PROPOSED SCHEME, AND TO OPINE ON ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE COUNTRY.

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INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 SMI-01 HEW-08 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3097

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10395

DEPT PASS TO SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE FOR DILLON RIPLEY;
HEW FOR SURGEON GENERAL; DOD FOR DEPT OF ARMY

I HAVE BEEN, ON DIFFERENT OCCASIONS, BOTH PROPOSER AND SCRUTINEER OF SUCH PROPOSALS, AND NO "FISHY" PROJECT IS LIKELY TO PASS THESE CHECKS. IF THE SCHEME IS APPROVED AND CONSIDERED TO BE OF SUFFICIENT NATIONAL IMPORTANCE, THE GOVERNMENT FORWARDS IT TO THE FOREIGN AGENCY FOR APPROVAL. IF THE FUNDS ARE MADE AVAILABLE, THEREFORE, THEY ARE FOR OUR PROPOSAL, APPROVED BY OUR GOVERNMENT, AND IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHETHER THE SOURCE IS A GOVERNMENT OR AN AUTONOMOUS BODY LIKE THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE. THEY HAVE NO SAY, EXCEPT OF ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION, IN THE RESEARCH WE DESIRE TO UNDERTAKE, ALSO THE RESEARCH WORKER IS NOT CONCERNED WITH ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE DONOR ORGANISATION, WHETHER IT BE THE INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH, THE WHO OR THE MAPS, WHICH HAS NO BEARING ON THE RESEARCH WORK OF HIS INTEREST. UNLESS YOU CAN BELIEVE THAT EVERY INDIAN SCIENTIST AND EVERY INDIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL CONCERNED IN THE PROCESS IS EITHER A FOOL OR A KNAVE, AND EVERY FOREIGN AGENCY IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABLE TO CLEVERLY DISGUISE ITS ESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES UNDER THE GUISE OF RESEARCH, THE RIDICULOUS NATURE OF YOUR CORRESPONDENT'S ALLEGATION WILL BE OBVIOUS.

"ALL THE DATA AND INFORMATION IN SUCH RESEARCH WORK IS COLLECTED AND ANALYSED BY OUR OWN WORKERS. THE RESULTS ARE OPEN AND ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANY INTERESTED WORKER. THEY ARE PUBLISHED IN THE REPORTS OF THE INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED AND, IF SUITABLE, IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS. NO SECRET OR ADVANCE REPORTS ARE GIVEN TO ANY DONOR, EXCEPT IN THE FORM OF ROUTINE REPORTS WHICH ARE OPEN FOR STUDY.

"KNOWLEDGE, IN ITSELF, IS NEUTRAL. THE USE MADE OF IT DEPENDS ON ONE'S INCLINATIONS. THE ONLY SAFEGUARD AGAINST MISUSE OF KNOWLEDGE IS THE FREE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND THE ABSENCE OF SECRECY. THUS KNOWLEDGEABLE PERSONS CAN ANTICIPATE AND DEVISE SAFEGUARDS AGAINST POSSIBLE HARMFUL APPLICATIONS.

"REGARDING THE CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL IMPACT OF APPLIED MICROBIOLOGY HELD IN BOMBAY IN 1969, I WAS A MEMBER OF THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE. THE REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE WAS PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF BOMBAY, AND CAN BE PURCHASED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OR OBTAINED FOR REFERENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, AND ALSO AT THE LIBRARIES OF ANY OF THE CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS. THERE IS NO

MYSTERY ABOUT THIS AS HUNDREDS OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS HAVE FOUND.

"I HAVE NO PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROGRAMME ON GENETIC CONTROL OF MOSQUITOES, OF THE WHO, THOUGH I KNOW PERSONALLY SEVERAL OF THE SCIENTISTS ENGAGED IN THIS WORK. IT WOULD REQUIRE A VERY GREAT GULLIBILITY TO BELIEVE THAT THESE PERSONS OR THE WHO COULD BE INVOLVED IN RESEARCH INIMICAL TO HUMAN WELFARE. SINCE THE ARTICLE OF JULY 29TH IS NOT A UNIQUE INSTANCE (I HAVE MYSELF READ FIVE SUCH ARTICLES CONTAINING VAGUE ALLEGATIONS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS) OF THE NATURE OF REPORTING BY THE PRESS THEIR RELUCTANCE TO DISCUSS THEIR WORK WITH THE "SCIENTIFIC CORRESPONDENT" IS READILY UNDERSTANDABLE."
BANE UNQUOTE. MOYNIHAN

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Message Attributes

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